

Sister, Sister Why is the Sky So Blue?

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PRATHAM BOOKS
A Book in Every Child's Hand

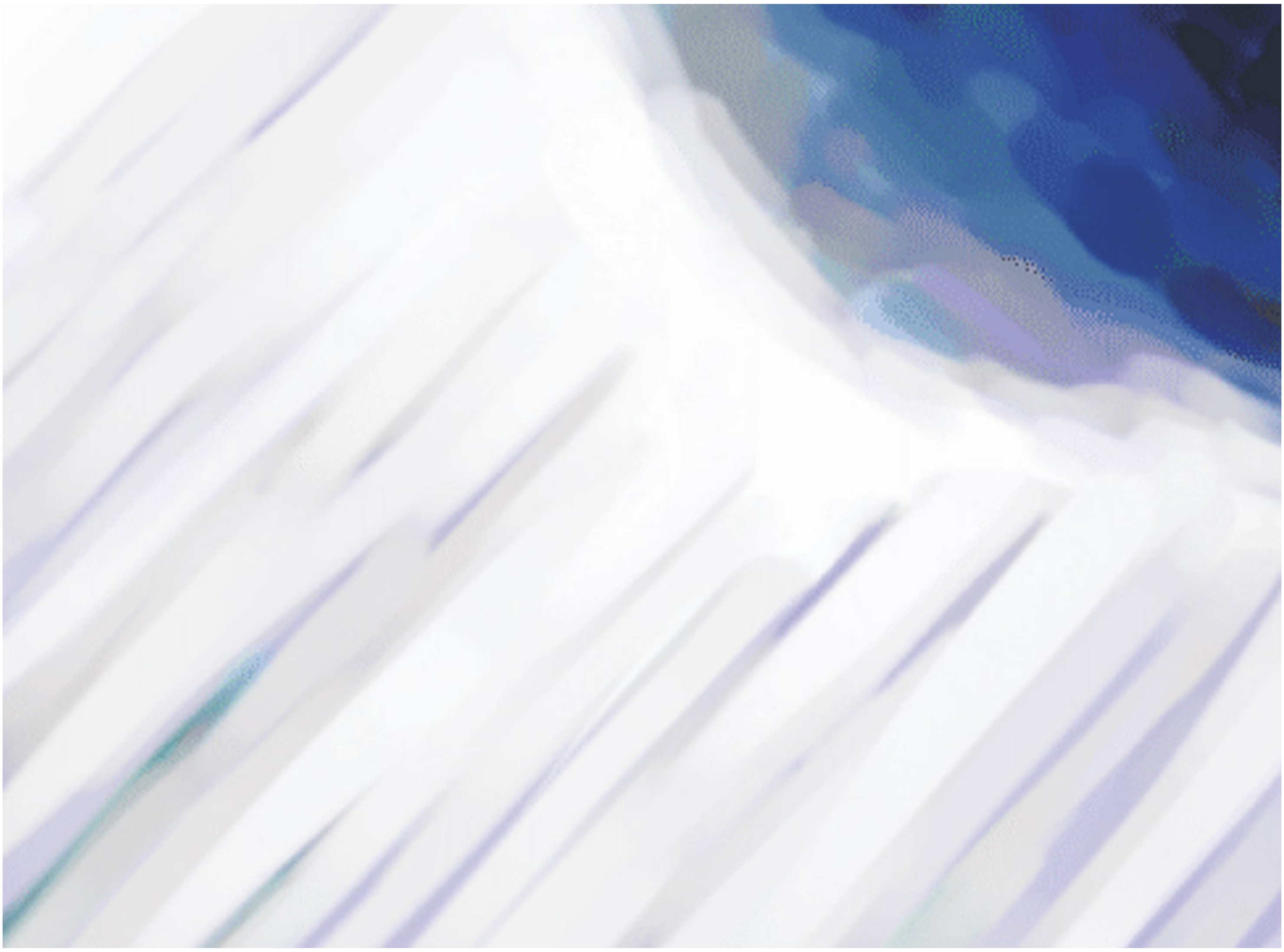
Level 3



Sister, sister, I wonder…
What do you wonder, little brother,
What do you wonder?
I wonder, I wonder, why the sky is so blue.
What do you think, little brother,
What do you think?
I think, I think…
Tell me, little brother,
what do you think?



I think
That maybe the sky
Is really an upside-down sea
With cloud-boats bobbing gently along.
That an E-NOR-MOUS sheet
Of clear plastic skin
Is stretched across that upside-down sea
To keep it in.



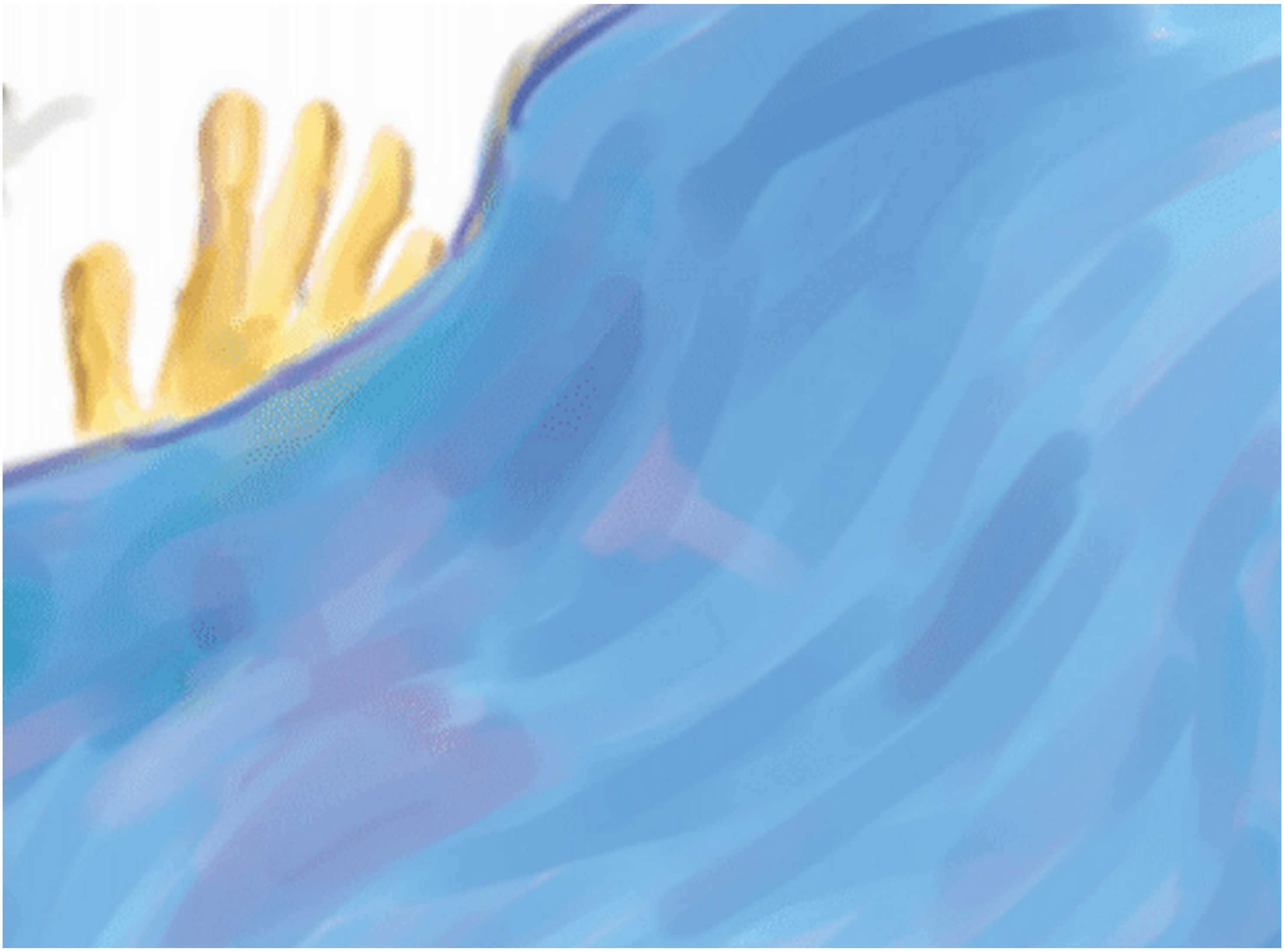
And sometimes the plastic tears a little
Here or there
Like plastic will
And then it rains.
I think that is why the sky is blue
Because it is a sea
And seas are blue.
I’m clever, aren’t I, sister?



Oh yes you are, little brother, oh yes you are
And maybe you are right, too...
But in the books I have read
That is not what they said.
Then what did they say, sister,
what did they say?
What do you think, little brother,
what do you think?
I think, I think,
Tell me, little brother, what do you think?



I think
That maybe the old woman
Who lives in the sky
Washes her ENORMOUS blue saree each night
And spreads it out to dry in the sun
Each morning.



She is careful, the old woman
She pins the saree down with cloud-stones
So that the naughty wind
Cannot carry it away.
I think that is why the sky is blue
Because the old woman in the sky
Spreads her saree out to dry.
I’m clever, aren’t I, sister?



Of course you are, little brother,
And maybe you are right, too…
But in the books that I have read
That is not what they said.
Then what did they say, sister,
What did they say?
What do you think, little brother,
what do you think?
I think, I think… Tell me, little brother,
What do you think?



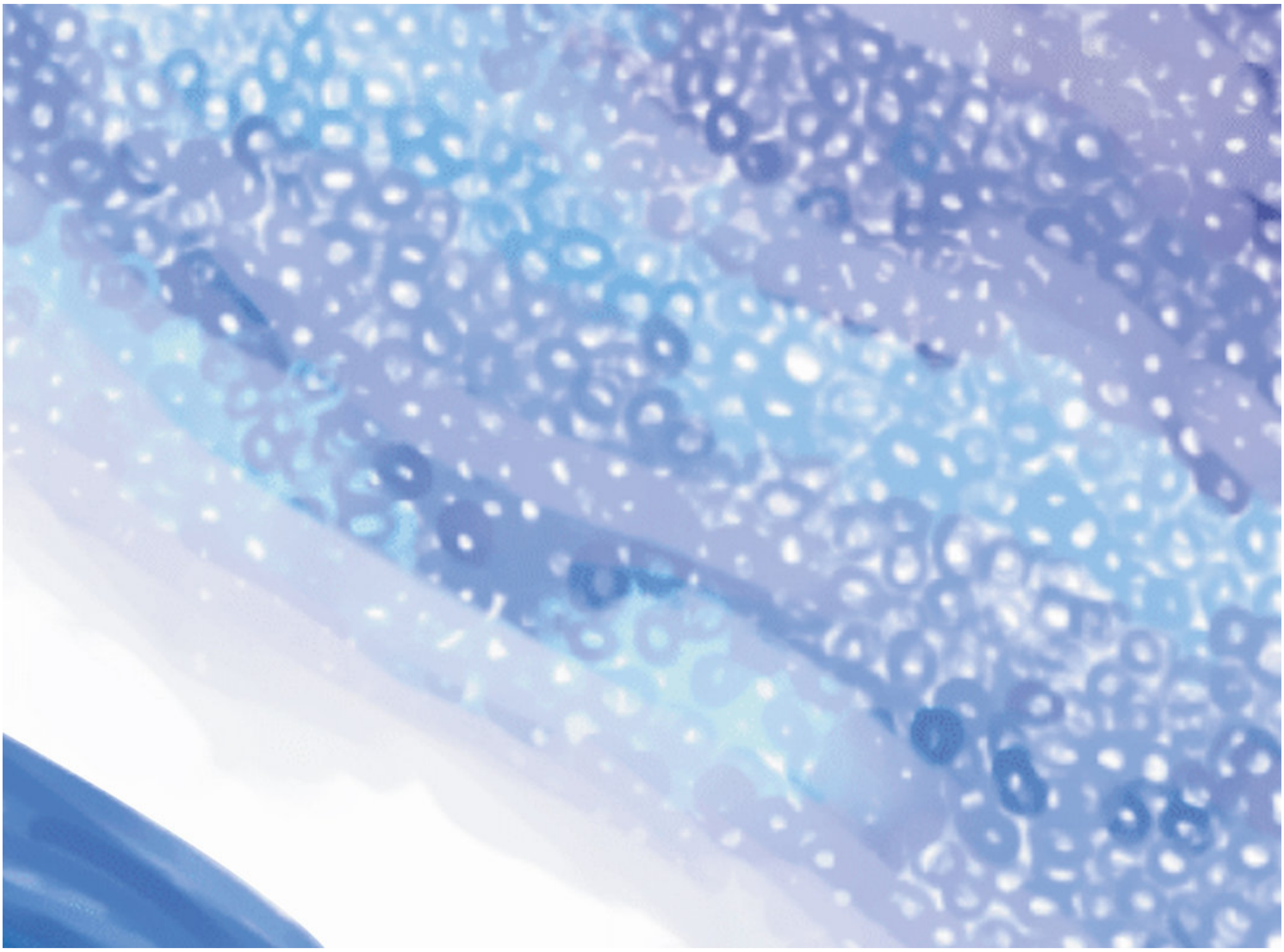
I think
That maybe, one long-ago Holi
The shops ran out of every colour BUT blue.
And I think, that day,
Such an ENORMOUS cloud of blue dust rose
From laughing blue people everywhere,
That it reached up, up, up all the way
To the sky.



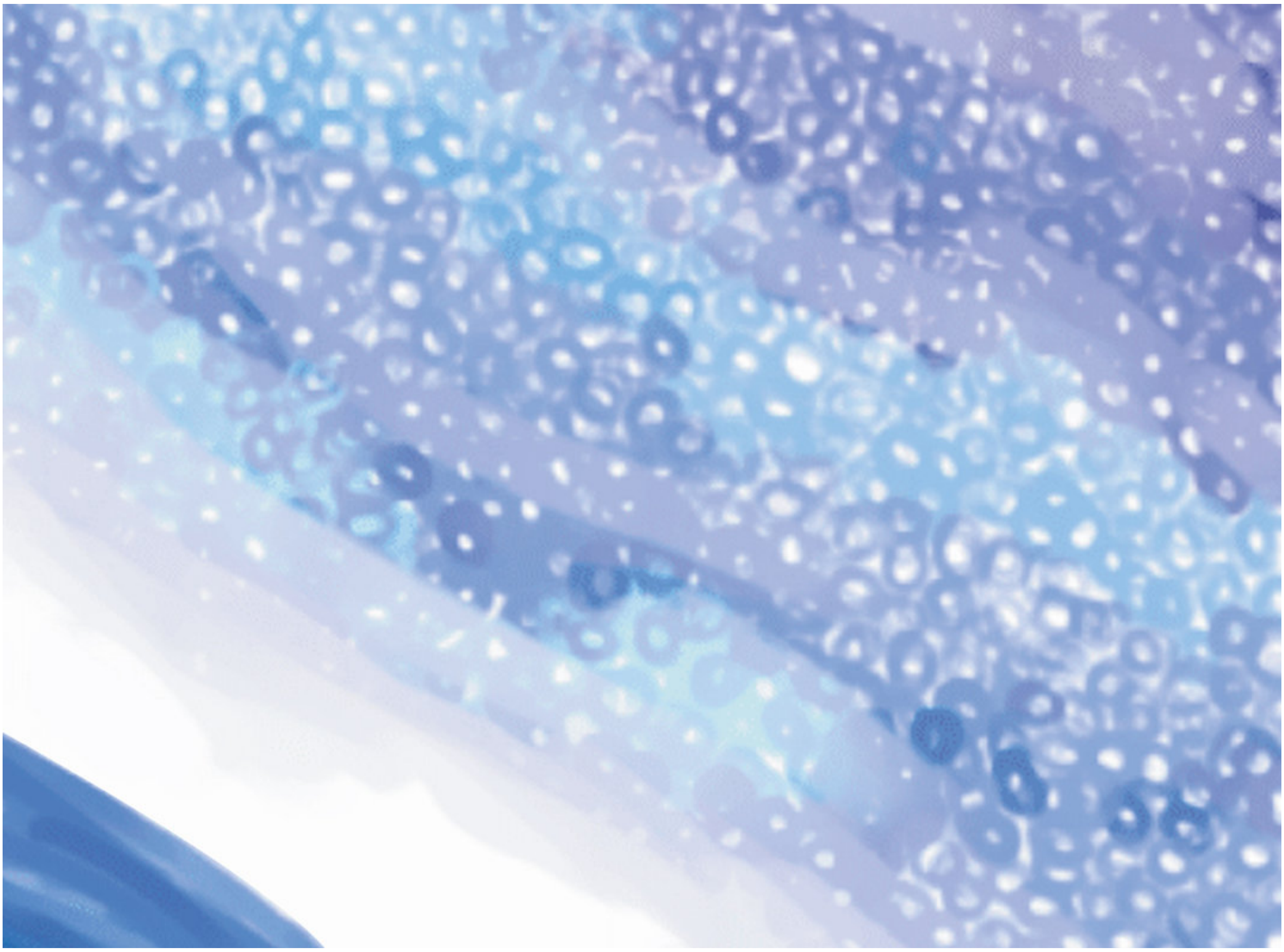
And the old woman, the one that lives up there,
She scrubs the sky each day
With cloud-cottonwool,
To get the stain out of the way.
I think that’s why the sky is blue
Because of a stubborn stain
That drives the old woman insane.
I’m clever, aren’t I, sister?



Oh yes, you are, little brother, oh yes you are
And maybe you are right, too…
But in the books I have read
That is not what they said.
Then what did they say, sister,
What did they say?
What do you think, little brother,
What do you think?
They said, they said…
Tell me, sister, what did they say?



They said
That there is a thick blanket of air
Around our blue and green earth
And that blanket is woven
Of millions of little things they call
Mo-le-cules.



They said
The air blanket is called
At-mos-phere.
But why is the sky so blue, sister,
Why is the sky so blue?
Be patient, little brother, be patient now.



They said
The golden light from the glorious sun
Is not golden at all
But white!
And what a white!
A rainbow-coloured white!



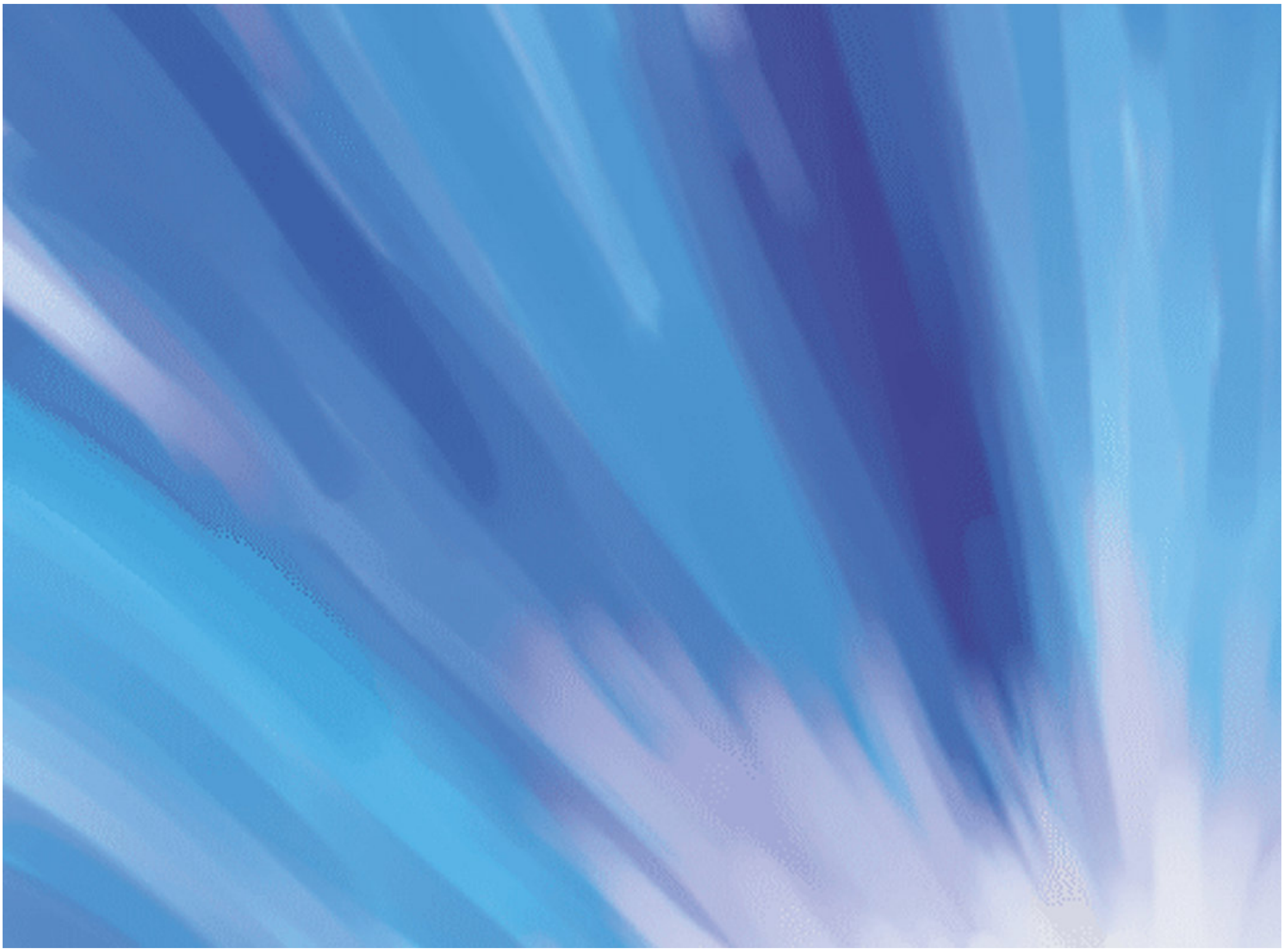
A violet-indigo-blue-green-yellow-orange-red white.
They said
It is the RAINBOW light
That comes to us
Through the At-mos-phere.



But the sky is blue, sister, not violet or yellow or green!
Listen, little brother, you'll see what I mean.
Now the Mo-le-cules in the At-mos-phere
Well, they are not very fair.



They let the red and the yellow and the orange light pass through
Mostly
And the green too
But the blue!
Oh, they give the blue a hard time!
What do they do to the blue, sister,
What do they do?
Tell me, sister, what do they do?



Well, when the sunlight strikes those
Millions and millions of MO-le-cules
They BOUNCE all that blue light
The blue, blue light's
Back where it came from;
And the poor blue light
Shatters, scatters
All over, ALL OVER, the sky
And turns it blue.



Can it be true, sister, can it be true?
I can’t say, little brother, I can’t say.
But in all the books that I have read
That is what they said.

FIND OUT MORE!

Why is the sky blue?

Sunlight is made up of all the colors of the rainbow: red, orange, yellow, green, blue, indigo and violet. The gas molecules in the atmosphere interact with the sunlight before it reaches our eyes.

Each ‘colour’ of light is actually a different wavelength of electromagnetic radiation. Different wavelengths not only make up different colours, they also behave differently. Each of the different wavelengths in sunlight (or, in other words, each of the colours that sunlight is made up of) interacts differently with the molecules in the atmosphere. When sunlight strikes the molecules, they scatter the blue light (which has a shorter wavelength) more than they do the red, orange, yellow and green lights (which have longer wavelengths). Since the blue portion is scattered more, the sky appears blue.

Try this experiment!

Why does the sky appear orange and red at dawn and dusk?
Let's try this exercise to find out.

You need:
A clear glass full of water
A little milk
A torch

What to do:
Shine the torch on the glass of water. Can you see the light in the water? Hardly. Now add a few drops of milk into the water. Then shine the torch again on the glass. This time, you will notice that the light is more visible. Add a few more drops of milk. Now you will notice that the light in the glass is distinctly blue.

Why does this happen?

When you add the first few drops of milk to the water, the number of molecules in the water increases. The fat and protein molecules in the milk scatter the light so that we can see it. When you increase the number of molecules by adding more milk, the light is scattered more, especially the blue light, which has a shorter wavelength.

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Sister, Sister Why is the Sky So Blue?
(English)

Little Brother's inquisitive mind is always full of questions for Big Sister. He knows Big Sister has all the answers, because she is always reading one big fat book or another. In this book, Little Brother wonders why the sky is blue. When Big Sister asks him why he things it could be so, his imagination runs riot. Could it be a giant blue sari spread out to dry in the sky that makes it blue, or is it something else altogether? Of course, Big Sister has the right answer in the end, but before you start reading this fun book to find out, tell us: why do YOU think the sky is blue?

This is a Level 3 book for children who are ready to read on their own.